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**CANTERBURY AORAKI  
CONSERVATION BOARD**

**Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Waitaha me Aoraki**

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**Annual Report**

**1 July 2023 – 30 June 2024**

# Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board

## Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Waitaha me Aoraki

### Annual Report

For the period 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024

*Presented to the New Zealand Conservation Authority pursuant to  
Section 6 (O) of the Conservation Act 1987*

For more information on the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board, please visit <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/conservation-boards/Canterbury-Aoraki/> or contact the Board Support Officer at the Department of Conservation in Christchurch ([canterburyaorakiboard@doc.govt.nz](mailto:canterburyaorakiboard@doc.govt.nz)).

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*Cover Photo: Arthur's Pass National Park  
(Image: M-L Grandiek)*

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## 1) CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT



### Whakamihī/ Thanks

The 2023-24 year has been another busy one for the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board / Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Waitaha me Aoraki. But before reflecting on our key achievements and challenges, I will start by acknowledging the passion and dedication of our team. While Board members come and go, we always retain a fantastic, diverse group of people. All are juggling many other demands of their time, but everyone still manages to contribute to our Board mahi and make a difference for conservation. Thank you all for your enthusiasm and hard work. Marie-Louise Grandiek, our Board Support Officer, always deserves special acknowledgement, for without Marie-Louise, our Board would be much less organised and efficient. Your knowledge and expertise Marie-Louise holds our team together. You always 'have my back' and I am indebted to your support and guidance again this year. In December we celebrated the retirement of Kopa Lee, tō tātou Pou. While Kopa was in no way 'replaceable,' the loss of this special position was a disappointment. As a Board, we greatly benefited from Kopa's arataki (guidance) and tautoko (support), ngā mihi nui ki a koe Kopa! Thanks to Jo McPherson, Janine Sidery, Kingsley Timpson, all the Eastern South Island leadership team, and to the wider DOC whānau. It has been and continues to be a tough time for conservation. Finding the incoming government's 6.5% 'savings' is demanding hard choices. Biodiversity inevitably suffers, and for those of us who care we also feel that pain...

*'Toitū te marae a Tane, Toitū te marae a Tangaroa, Toitū te iwi'*

If the land is well and the sea is well, the people will thrive

During this year we welcomed Justin Tipa as the new kaiwhakahaere of Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu, and with the changing of government, we welcomed a new Minister of Conservation, Hon. Tama Potaka. Our Board looks forward to working with Tama and Justin in the years ahead.

### Whakatutuki /Achievements

It was another busy year on the permissions/submission front, with our team providing feedback on a number of applications, including making substantive submissions on the Biodiversity Credit System Discussion Document and on the Fast-Track Approvals Bill.

For the latter, Richard Suggate and I took the opportunity to present our Board's view on this important proposed legislative change to the Government Select Committee. Our Board maintained activity and focus on biodiversity issues, backcountry infrastructure challenges, and ensuring Te Tiriti is front and centre of all we do.

Our joint meeting with the New Zealand Conservation Authority in October 2023 was a real highlight. We took a journey to Aoraki/Mount Cook, focusing on key issues of braided rivers, wilding pines, and climate change, finishing at Te Hapa o Nui Tireni, Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua Marae. At Aoraki/Mount Cook, it was incredibly special to have the company and input from Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua, Te Rūnanga o Waihao and Te Rūnanga o Moeraki. It made for a very special time, sharing whakapapa, pūrākau and perhaps most importantly, aspirations for the future.

Our Board also enjoyed a joint hui with neighbours Te Tai Poutini, the Westland Conservation Board, connecting at Arthur's Pass National Park and travelling through to Lake Brunner. While people draw lines on maps, nature knows no such boundaries, meaning that the cooperation and collaboration of our Boards whose 'territories' traverse Kā Tiritiri o te Moana is essential.

A personal highlight during this year was the opportunity to participate in a kakī release in Whimiahua (Godley catchment). Over 70 manu were returned to their real home. Two rangitahi wāhine from Te Rūnanga o Waihao gave a karakia, then the birds were set-free. The ongoing support and commitment from key partners, like the Isaac Conservation and Wildlife Trust, ensures that each year gains are made for conservation. Further, the Trust once again were key sponsors of our Board's Annual Conservation Awards, along with Glentanner Park. Our Awards night is always a highlight, and we were honoured to have Eugenie Sage support our event as guest speaker. This year we celebrated joint winners of our prestigious Te Waka o Aoraki Trophy; Rangiruru Girls College (Ōtautahi/Christchurch) for their CARE (Caring and Active Rangī Environmentalists) programme, and Point Bush Ecological Trust (Waimate) for their work establishing a 95 hectare predator free native bush area and planned Junior Ranger Programme – ngā mihi nui ki a kōrua!

This year our Board further strengthened our objective to *“Liaise with relevant mana whenua groups to identify opportunities to connect with and deepen Board understanding of mana whenua and their conservation priorities as part of bi-monthly Board meetings”*. We held two hui on marae (Arowhenua and Wairewa) and engaged with iwi on excursions to Brunner and Aoraki.

## Taunahua/Challenges

Clearly the government funding cuts were a significant challenge for conservation this year, but our Board also felt ongoing frustration of not seeing substantial progress on a revised Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan. While progress is being made, the road is long.

Our Board is committed to improving how we and DOC work with mana whenua in these special spaces and look forward to ongoing kōreroreo and progress on this important kaupapa in the year ahead.

## Nau mai te tau ake / Looking forward...

After six years on the Board, my second term has come to an end. I am extremely proud of all that our Board has achieved not only this year but over my last two terms. While Board members come and go, the commitment and enthusiasm to make a difference for our whenua and taonga does not falter. I take heart that as I step aside there are many more keen people in my wake who are passionate and committed to te taiao and the taonga within.

Nō reira, kia kaha, kia manawanui...

*Ehara tāku toa i te toa takitahi, he toa takitini*  
(My strength is not as an individual, but as a collective)

Ngā mihi nui



Dr Heather Purdie  
Chairperson, Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board

## 2) INTRODUCTION

This is the 26<sup>th</sup> Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board Annual Report. Section 6 (O) of the Conservation Act 1987 (the Act) requires Conservation Boards to provide the New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) with an annual report as soon as practicable after 30 June each year. In recognition of this requirement, the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board (the Board) submits this annual report.

Conservation Boards are appointed by the Minister of Conservation under Section 6 (P) of the Act. Board functions are outlined in Section 6 (M) and the powers, which enable the Conservation Boards to carry out these functions, are under Section 6 (N) of the Act. The Board had 12 (twelve) members for the 2023-2024 year appointed by the Minister of Conservation under the terms of the Act.

Conservation Boards are independent advisory bodies, established by statute. The Board represents the community and offers interaction between communities and the Department of Conservation (the Department), within their area of jurisdiction.

The Board has several statutory roles under various Acts, including:

- The recommendation of the Canterbury (Waitaha) Conservation Management Strategy (CMS) to the NZCA for approval.
- Advising the Department and the NZCA on how conservation management strategies and plans will be put into practice.
- The approval of Conservation Management Plans.
- The recommendations of National Park Management Plans to the NZCA for approval.
- Advising the Department and the NZCA on conservation matters, and proposed changes to the status of land of national and international significance.
- Liaising with any Fish & Game Council on conservation matters.
- Carrying out other powers delegated by the Minister of Conservation, the Conservation Act or any other Act.

Conservation Boards also have several functions under Section 30 of the National National Park Management Plans and recommending approval of these plans by the NZCA.

## 3) ANNUAL WORK PLAN

After receiving its Annual Letter of Expectations (See Appendix I) from the Minister of Conservation, the Board set out its work plan for the year. Please refer to Appendix II for the full Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board Annual Work Programme.



## 4) CONSERVATION BOARD REGION - ROHE

The Board's area of jurisdiction covers an area of 5,201,723.07 hectares. The jurisdiction extends from the Conway and Clarence Rivers in the north and west, to the main divide including all of Arthur's Pass and Aoraki/Mount Cook National Parks. The southern boundary is the catchment of the Waitaki River at Kurow, along the river to the east coast. The area also extends out to the 12-nautical mile limit with respect to coastal and marine issues, and out to the 200-nautical mile limit with respect to protected species.

Approximately 14.6% of New Zealand's public conservation land area lies within the Board's jurisdiction. Public Conservation land and areas make up 48% of all land in Canterbury Aoraki. This consists of:

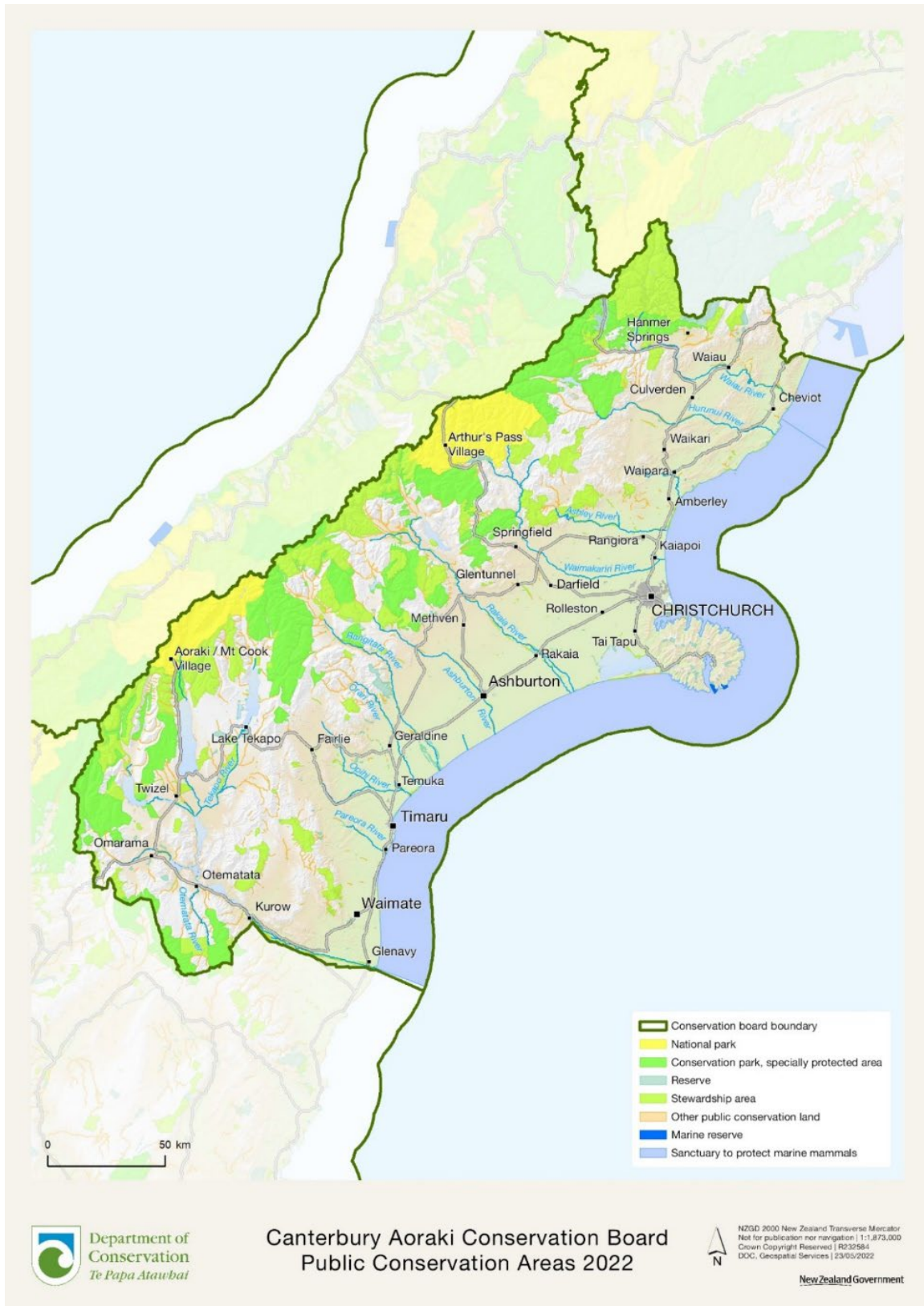
- 1,153,494.95 ha of Public Conservation Land
- 951,420.13 ha of sanctuaries to protect marine mammals
- 74.35 ha of marine reserves

### Conservation features of the area

The key features of Public Conservation Land and waters within the Board's rohe are:

- Arthur's Pass National Park - 118,522.21 ha
  - Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park - 72,147.90 ha
  - Nelson Lakes National Park - 6.53 ha
  - Ahuriri Conservation Park - 47,887.36 ha
  - Craigieburn Forest Park - 44,683.03 ha
  - Hakatere Conservation Park - 59,582.41 ha
  - Hanmer Forest Park - 11,777.03 ha
  - Hawea Conservation Park - 1,704.03 ha
  - Ka Whata Tu o Rakihouia Conservation Park - 41.84 ha
  - Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park - 23,991.15 ha
  - Lake Sumner (Hoka Kura) Forest Park - 105,029.06 ha
  - Oteake Conservation Park - 33,757.70 ha
  - Ruataniwha Conservation Park - 37,094.69 ha
  - Te Kahui Kaupeka Conservation Park - 93,081.71 ha
- 
- 105 scenic reserves - 22,908.42 ha
  - 9 historic reserves - 21.58 ha
  - 36 recreation reserves - 5,930.55 ha
  - 437 stewardship areas - 443,879.82 ha
  - 4 specially protected Areas - 6,588.37 ha
  - wilderness areas - 7,171.25 ha
  - 2 sanctuaries to protect marine mammals - 951,420.13 ha
  - 2 marine reserves - 746.35 ha

Figure 1: Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board Jurisdiction



## 5) BOARD FUNCTIONS

The Board has a statutory obligation to fulfil Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987 viz: *“This Act shall so be interpreted and administered to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi”*.

- Section 4 is a powerful and fundamental provision, requiring more than procedural steps and must be considered in light of other extrinsic aids.
- Other statutory objectives must be achieved to the extent they are consistent with Section 4.

### 5.1 Board functions under Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987

The functions of the Board are:

- 1) To recommend the approval by the NZCA of conservation management strategies, and the review and amendment of such strategies, under the relevant enactments.
- 2) To approve conservation management plans, and the review and amendment of such plans, under the relevant enactments.
- 3) To advise the NZCA and the Director-General of the Department on the implementation of conservation management strategies and conservation management plans for the area within the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 4) To advise the NZCA or the Director-General of the Department:
  - a) On any proposed change of status or classification of any area of national or international importance; and
  - b) On any other conservation matter relating to any area within the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 5) To liaise with any Fish & Game Council on matters within the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 6) To exercise such powers and functions as may be delegated to it by the Minister under this Act or any other Act.

### 5.2 Powers of the Board under Section 6N of the Conservation Act 1987

- 1) Every Board shall have all such powers as are reasonably necessary or expedient to enable it to carry out its functions.
- 2) Without limiting the generality of subsection (1), each Board may:
  - a) Advocate its interests at any public forum or in any statutory planning process; and
  - b) Appoint committees of members and other suitable persons, and delegate to them functions and powers.
- 3) The power conferred by subsection (2) a) shall include the right to appear before courts and tribunals in New Zealand and be heard on matters affecting or relating to the Board's functions.

### 5.3 Board functions under Section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980

There are two national parks within the Board's regional: Arthur's Pass National Park and Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park. The Board's functions under the National Parks Act 1980 are:

- 1) To recommend management plans, and the review or amendment of such plans, for parks within the jurisdiction of the Board in accordance with Sections 45 to 47.
- 2) To consider and determine priorities for the implementation of management plans for national parks.
- 3) To make recommendations to the Minister for appointment of honorary rangers under Section 40.
- 4) To review and report to the Director-General of the Department or the Authority, as appropriate, on the effectiveness of the administration of the General Policies for National Parks within the jurisdiction of the Board.
- 5) To give advice to the Director-General of the Department or the Authority:
  - i. on the interpretation of any management plan for a park, and
  - ii. on any proposal for the addition of land to any national park or the establishment of a new national park, and
  - iii. on any other matter relating to any national park, within the jurisdiction of the Board.

### 5.4 Membership

There were 12 Board members appointed by the Minister of Conservation for the reporting year.

*Table 4.1 Board membership*

Board Member	Area	Term Start	Term End
Courtney Bennett	Christchurch	01/07/22	30/06/25
Robert Brears	Christchurch	17/08/23	30/06/25
Rachael Evans	Christchurch	17/08/23	30/06/26
Joseph Hullen*	Kaiapoi	01/09/07	30/06/25
Distinguished Professor Philip Hulme	Lincoln	01/07/21	30/06/25
Michael McMillan*	Temuka	01/07/20	30/06/23
Paul Milligan	Christchurch	17/08/23	30/06/26
Dr Heather Purdie	Canterbury	01/07/18	30/06/24
Rachel Robilliard*	Canterbury	01/07/19	30/06/25
Richard Suggate	Banks Peninsula	01/07/22	30/06/25
Puawai Swindells-Wallace*	Christchurch	01/07/21	30/06/24
Brenden Winder	Christchurch	17/08/23	30/06/26

\*Denotes Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu appointee

## 5.5 Member profiles

### Dr Heather Purdie of Canterbury (Chairperson)

Dr Purdie is an Associate Professor at the University of Canterbury, who specialises in Physical Geography and Glaciology. Heather has 14 years' experience in conducting research into New Zealand glaciers and their response to climate change, and the implications of environmental change to commercial tourism concessions and recreational activities on conservation land. She is also a scientific advisor for the DOC Learning Experiences Outside the Classroom (LEOTC) programme at Aoraki/Mount Cook.

### Michael McMillan of Temuka (Deputy Chairperson)

Michael (Rapuwai, Waitaha, Kāti Mamoe, Ngāi Tahu) is a nominee by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and is the current Deputy Chair of the Board. Notable kaupapa he has led on the Board include the Aoraki Mount Cook National Park review/consultation; commercial eeling in the Mackenzie country lakes through MPI quota; Rangitata conservation lands and encroachment on the river; and developments at Kura Tawhiti.

### Courtney Bennett of Christchurch

Courtney's background is in environmental and strategic planning. She runs a planning consultancy that specialises in policy and plan-writing, community engagement, and research; and has previously worked on national park-related projects in a technical capacity. Courtney has also published several academic articles focusing on best practice mana whenua engagement methodologies and incorporating Māori worldviews and mātauranga into planning processes.

### Robert Brears

Robert has 12 years of experience in climate change and natural resources management, on topics including water resources management, climate change mitigation/adaptation, and nature-based solutions.

### Rachael Evans

Rachael (Ngāti Tama and Ngāti Pamoana) is a lecturer in law at Canterbury University. She is a former practicing lawyer specialising in Treaty rights and water resource management government law. Ms Evans has considerable knowledge about Te Ao Māori and conservation, tikanga and the environment.

### Joseph Hullen

Joseph (Ngāi Tahu) was nominated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. He has skills in environmental management and advocacy, is a mahinga kai practitioner and provides strong cultural awareness. He is currently employed as a whakapapa researcher for Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu.

### Distinguished Professor Philip Hulme

Distinguished Professor Hulme is an experienced biosecurity academic. He has served on Biosecurity Advisory Committees for the UK and New Zealand governments, as well as Environment Canterbury. He has an excellent understanding of data and statistics, the ability to make evidence-based decisions, knowledge of the research landscape that supports conservation activities in New Zealand, and a sound understanding of governance best practice.

### Paul Milligan

Paul has a background in marine tourism, providing insights into both marine issues and the tourism industry.

### Rachel Robilliard

Rachel is of Ngāi Tahu, Ngāi Te Ruahikihiki, and Te Taumutu Rūnanga descent and was nominated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. She has a legal background with a focus on environmental planning and natural resources law. She has experience advising on legal and compliance requirements for a range of environmental and resource management matters. She is also a member of the Kaitiakitanga Portfolio for Te Taumutu Rūnanga.

### Richard Suggate

After a 30-year career working for the Department across Canterbury and other locations, Richard brings to the Board a wide understanding of biodiversity, recreation and conservation operations. During his career, he established relationships with Canterbury papatipu rūnanga and many local groups. Richard is currently a member of a number of conservation, recreation, and community organisations, including co-chairing the Rod Donald Banks Peninsula Trust.

### Puawai Swindells-Wallace

Puawai is of Ngā Puhi, Ngāti Whātua ki Kaipara, Waikato-Tainui, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Waitaha, Kāti Mamoe, and Ngāi Tahu descent and was nominated by Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu. She has experience in conservation operations, is an active advocate and member of her hapū and wider community, has a high level of cultural awareness, and is skilled in networking, advocacy, and bicultural communication.

### Brenden Winder

Brenden (Ngāi Irakehu, Tūwharetoa) has a varied background in maritime matters, land and vegetation fire management, emergency management, and tourism. He provides an understanding of working with government, local government, and non-government agencies. Brenden also strengthens the Māori representation on the Board.

## 5.6 Meetings

The Board held six meetings during the reporting period. Venues for the meetings vary each year to ensure wide coverage and enable members of the public in the district to attend meetings and access the Board.

*Table 1: Board meeting dates and locations*

Date	Area
4 August 2023	Christchurch
19 October 2023	Temuka
4 December 2022	Christchurch
21 February 2024	Lake Brunner
16 April 2024	Lincoln

## 5.7 Attendance

The table below summarises the Board meetings, workshops and field trips attended by members during the year. Members attended additional meetings and events, including subcommittee meetings, representative and liaison roles.

*Table #11: Board member attendance*

Board Member	Board Meetings	Field Trips	Workshops
Courtney Bennett	3/5	3/3	1/2
Robert Brears*	0/5	0/3	0/2
Rachael Evans*	4/5	2/3	0/2
Joseph Hullen	2/5	0/3	0/2
Distinguished Professor Philip Hulme	5/5	3/3	2/2
Michael McMillan	3/5	1/3	2/2
Paul Milligan*	4/5	3/3	1/2
Dr Heather Purdie	5/5	3/3	2/2
Rachel Robilliard	5/5	2/2	2/2
Richard Suggate	5/5	3/3	2/2
Puawai Swindells-Wallace	4/5	3/3	2/2
Brenden Winder*	2/5	0/3	0/2

\* Official appointment to the Board was 17 August 2023

## 5.8 Field Trips

Field trips are an excellent opportunity for Board members to become more aware of conservation issues within their region.

### 17/18 October 2023 - South Canterbury and Aoraki/Mount Cook

This was a joint field trip with the NZCA, focusing on engagement with mana whenua (Waihao and Moeraki) and Department staff, with discussions on several significant strategic issues within the Board's role. Site visits included Lake Tekapo/Takapō, Pūkaki Scientific Reserve, Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park (Tasman Valley Lake Walk), and the Department's offices in Raukapuka/Geraldine, Te Manahuna/Twizel and Aoraki/Mount Cook.

Presentations were received on:

- Braided awa (rivers)
- Pukaki fire
- Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan Review
- Wilding conifers
- Climate change
- Solar farms

#### 4 December 2023 - Wairewa/Little River

The focus of the field trip was on Rūnanga-led biodiversity initiatives. The Board remains committed to the aspirations of Mana Whenua, engaging as often as possible on their whenua. The board heard stories about the Ōkana river, the relationship between whenua and water, and the history of Wairewa whanau. The Board was fortunate to be taken to the tuna (freshwater eel) drains at Birdlings Flat, where the tuna harvest is by customary permit only. The Board also visited the canal and over bridge which was built to help manage flooding and is open only occasionally.

The Board gained an understanding and appreciation of:

- Māori history, occupation, and traditions in the area
- Unique culture, location and history whilst preserving the values and strengthening the development of Te Rūnanga o Wairewa



Canal at Birdlings Flat  
(Image: M-L Grandiek)



## 20 February 2024 - Arthur's Pass / Lake Brunner

This was a joint field trip with the West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board, focusing on the Department's activities within Arthur's Pass National Park, Mt Te Kinga and Lake Brunner.

Key sites visited included Greyneys Shelter, Arthur's Pass Village and Visitor Centre, Lake Misery Track/Dobson Nature Walk, and the Iveagh Bay Campground at Lake Brunner.

Presentations were received from Department staff and general discussion was held on:

- The overall status of weeds, the road/train corridor, and the increase of weeds into sub-alpine spaces within the National Park.
- Arthur's Pass Visitor Centre project.
- Status of kea, social impacts, and pest control impacts on the kea population
- Predator Free Te Kinga Project.



Cockayne Nature Walk, Arthur's Pass National Park

*(Image: M-L Grandiek)*

## 5.9 Special Events

The Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board Awards are held annually to recognise and encourage conservation efforts and achievements in Canterbury. The Board awards the ‘Te Waka o Aoraki’ trophy to a person or group of people who have been nominated to be considered for the award. The 2023 Awards were sponsored by The Isaac Wildlife and Conservation Trust.

The 2023 Award was jointly presented to Point Bush Ecological Trust, and Rangī Ruru Girls’ School. The prize money will be used towards the establishment of an Ecopod based educational area for the Point Bush Ecological Trust’s Junior Ranger Programme. Rangī Ruru Girls’ School will utilise their prize money to contribute to establishing water tanks for the irrigation of seedlings and to trial the use of eco-friendly pots made from wool as an alternative to plastic pots/bags.

Glentanner Park (Mt Cook) Limited sponsored the Schools Conservation Award, which was awarded to Avonhead School Environ Group.

The ‘Spark a New Idea’ Award went to St Martins School for their Tuna Action Group.



Te Waka o Aoraki Winners - Rangī Ruru Girls’ School and Point Bush Ecological Trust  
Pictured with 2023 Awards Sponsor – The Isaac Wildlife and Conservation Trust  
(Image: C Bennett)

### ~~06 Department of Conservation Board Meetings~~

The following Departmental staff attended some or all of the Board meetings throughout the reporting period:

- Operations Director, Eastern South Island
- Issues Manager, Eastern South Island
- Statutory Manager, Eastern South Island
- Board Support Officer, Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board
- Pou Tairangahau
- Operations Managers – North Canterbury, Mahaanui, Geraldine, Aoraki Mount Cook and Twizel

## 6. Statutory Activity

### 6.1 Canterbury (Waitaha) 2016 Conservation Management Strategy

*Conservation General Policy requires the Department to report, at least annually, on the implementation of the CMS.*

#### Implementation Monitoring

At its bi-monthly meetings, the Board received regular operations and planning reports from the Department, which included information on the wide-ranging work undertaken by Departmental staff. These reports included, and were aligned with, engagement with mana whenua and references to CMS Milestones.

The Board received the Departmental report on the implementation of the Canterbury (Waitaha) 2016 Conservation Management Strategy (CMS), at its meeting of 20 February 2024.

NB: The Board has noted that the CMS does not contain a ‘Canterbury Plains Place’ and accordingly, are mindful that numerous sites throughout Canterbury (Waitaha), are not incorporated within the CMS.

### 6.2 Management Plans

There are two National Parks within the Board’s area of jurisdiction. Each National Park has a management plan which is intended to be reviewed at 10-year intervals.

#### Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park

The Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park Management Plan was approved by the NZCA in 2004. The process for reviewing the management plan was paused while the Department and Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu worked through the wider implications of the Supreme Court’s decision on the Ngāi Tai ki Tamaki case. Agreement has been reached to progress a new review of the management plan and this is currently being undertaken.

The Department presented an annual report to the Board on the existing management plan in October 2023. The Board's involvement in plan-making activities for the new management plan has been on hold since late 2022 until such time as the Board is confident that the Department is engaging fully with mana whenua. The Board has requested that a framework be put in place to enable the process to comply with the Board's requirements that the new management plan is co-designed with Kaitiaki Rūnaka and is reflective of the Department's responsibility to 'give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi/Te Tiriti'.



Tasman Lake, Aoraki/Mount Cook National Park  
(Image: R Suggate)

### Arthur's Pass National Park

The Arthur's Pass National Park Management Plan was approved by the NZCA in December 2007. It was due for review in 2017, but this has yet to be commenced by the Department.

The Department presented an annual report to the Board on the existing management plan in October 2023.

## Te Waihora Joint Management Plan / Mahere Tukutahi o Te Waihora

The Te Waihora Joint Management Plan (2005) is the first statutory joint management plan between the Crown and Iwi, and results from the settlement of Ngāi Tahu claims against the Crown and in particular, the loss of access to places where the tribes produced or procured food and other resources.

There has been no annual reporting to the Board since the commencement of the Plan.

## 7. Advocacy

### 7.1 Board Liaisons

All Board members have responsibility for liaising with other groups when opportunities arise, and some members have specific roles in liaison. The Board appointed various members to liaise with other groups and agencies.

The Board's immediate neighbours are the Nelson Marlborough, West Coast Tai Poutini and Otago Conservation Boards. The Board's respective liaisons monitor the minutes for issues of common interest and report back at each meeting.

All Board members have responsibility for liaising with other groups when opportunities arise, and some members have specific roles in liaison. The Board appointed various members to liaise with other groups and agencies.

*Table#V#Board#Liaisons#and#Representatives*

Board Member	Group/Agency/Organisation
Joseph Hullen	<i>Fish &amp; Game</i>
Michael McMillan	Himalayan Tahr Control Plan Implementation Group National Wallaby Management Programme Department of Conservation Community Fund
Richard Suggate	Department of Conservation – Stewardship Land Reclassification
Courtney Bennett	Social media
Rachel Robilliard	Nelson Marlborough Conservation Board
Richard Suggate	West Coast Tai Poutini Conservation Board
Courtney Bennett	Otago Conservation Board

## 7.2 Advice to the Department of Conservation

The Board provided advice and recommendations to the Department on several concession applications in relation to:

- Marginal strips – Hanmer River, Makerikeri River, Kaputone Stream
- Selwyn River Conservation Area
- Waitaki River
- Loch Katrine Reserve, Lake Sumner Forest Park
- Castle Hill Conservation Area
- Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park
- Hanmer Field Base and Picnic Conservation Area
- Conservation reserve land, Porters Pass
- Lake Ruataniwha Conservation Area
- Mt Potts Conservation Area
- Arthur’s Pass National Park

## 7.3 Community Advocacy and Involvement

The Board believes that working with conservation organisations and members of the public is particularly important. Board meetings were held in different locations within the Board’s rohe and opportunities for the public to attend Board meetings were advertised. Members of the public attended the Public Forum at several of the year’s meetings, and a range of issues were discussed. The Board appreciates this input from the public.

The Board provided submissions/comment on the following:

- Clough Cableway, Arthur’s Pass National Park (Department of Conservation)
- Exploring a biodiversity credit system for Aotearoa New Zealand, Discussion
- Document (Ministry for the Environment)
- Water Permits (Environment Canterbury)
- Fast Track Approvals Bill (Ministry for the Environment)

## 7.4 Community Visibility

The Board maintains a presence on the Department’s website with updates provided throughout the year on activities undertaken. The Board also maintains a presence on social media via Facebook and Instagram.

## 7.5 Fees and Allowances

Fees and allowances are paid in accordance with the Fees and Travelling Allowances Act 1951. Fees for statutory boards are set in accordance with the Cabinet Fees Framework.

# Appendix I– Minister of Conservation: Letter of Expectations

## Hon Willow-Jean Prime

MP for Northland  
Minister of Conservation  
Minister for Youth  
Associate Minister for Arts, Culture and Heritage  
Associate Minister of Health



1 May 2023

Ref: 23-B-0143

Eila Gendig  
Chairperson  
Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board  
[eila.gendig@gmail.com](mailto:eila.gendig@gmail.com)

Tēnā koe Eila

### Annual Letter of Expectations for 2023-24 – Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board

I would like to thank you and your board members for your ongoing efforts to serve the Canterbury Aoraki community and for continuing to be local conservation leaders.

The purpose of this letter is to confirm my expectations for your board. These expectations should inform the development of your board's planning process for the year. This letter also sets out a framework for successfully working with the Department of Conservation (the Department).

The basis for my expectations originates in the statutory functions set out in section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987 (the Act), section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980, and the Reserves Act 1977. As reflected in these statutes, the focus of conservation boards is policy issues, strategic direction, and planning, not the day-to-day operations of the Department.

#### Government and ministerial priorities

For the 2023-24 year, my priorities for conservation boards are to:

- Support the implementation of Te Mana o te Taiao – the Aotearoa New Zealand Biodiversity Strategy
- Embed the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi in accordance with the obligations of section 4 of the Act in all aspects of work
- Support the transition to a lower-carbon conservation delivery model, having regard to the Climate Change Response (Zero Carbon) Amendment Act 2019.

#### Board-specific priorities

For the 2023-24 year, my priorities for the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board are to:

- Support significant progress on the Aoraki Mt Cook National Park Management review
- Support improved management of braided river ecosystems
- Maintain strong working relationships with whānau, hapū, iwi and mana whenua

- Continue to increase Board engagement and networking with the community, in particular to understand and reflect their interests in the work of the Board.

I expect these priorities to be reflected in your 2023-24 Strategic Annual Work Plan and that you will work with the Department on its priorities, and look forward to seeing the outcomes in your annual report.

I have been informed by my officials that your priorities for the 2023-24 year include:

- Advocating for weed management
- Advocating for back country recreational assets and access
- Responding to the challenges of climate change
- Advocating for marine protection
- Meeting the board's obligations in relation to Section 4 of the Conservation Act and honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Stewardship Land re-classification.

#### **Resources**

The Department services conservation boards in accordance with section 6V of the Act. This includes providing resources developed by the Department to help boards achieve the highest standards of conservation leadership. These are published and updated as appropriate at [www.conservationboards.org.nz](http://www.conservationboards.org.nz).

#### **Your community**

As board members, you represent the public interest in conservation. It is integral that you are active and visible in your communities, so that you bring a well-informed community voice to the table. New Zealand communities are becoming increasingly engaged with conservation and are increasingly aware of the importance of preserving and protecting our natural environment. I expect your board to continue to encourage, nurture and facilitate this interest.

#### **Working with the Department of Conservation**

The Department is focused on the delivery of quality conservation work, which aligns with the conservation leadership role you play within your local communities. I expect you to work collaboratively with the Operations Director and Statutory Manager to maintain a strong working relationship with the Department. This relationship is important in providing advice to the Department on conservation matters within your area. I expect you to report on what is working well for you, and areas that require improvement.

#### **Working with other conservation boards and the NZCA**

Conservation is a nationwide challenge, and work on conservation matters, management strategies and plans frequently requires working across boundaries with other conservation boards. I encourage you to continue to develop effective ways of working together with other conservation boards to establish a consistent and efficient approach and avoid a duplication of efforts. The New Zealand Conservation Authority (NZCA) is a source of support for conservation boards to draw upon in relation to the national and policy context for conservation issues.



### **No surprises**

I expect to be informed well in advance of any material or significant events relating to the board, whether positive or negative. Examples of matters that could fall within the 'no surprises' policy could include, but are not limited to, imminent media coverage of any activities that could attract critical media comment, or any matters on which I could be asked to express a view.

### **Understanding conservation boards' legal obligations**

I expect that all conservation board members fully understand their legal obligations under conservation law, including the hierarchy of priorities that should be taken into account when making decisions. Conservation boards' legal obligations are covered in section 5 of the Conservation Board Manual.<sup>1</sup>

### **Planning**

I expect you, with the Operations Director, will be finalising your work plan in the near future. Your work plan should align with your statutory obligations under the Act, the National Parks Act 1980, and the Reserves Act 1977. I expect that your finalised work plan would include measures and milestones, demonstration of what success will look like for each priority, and how your board will be able to support the Department's priorities.

I appreciate the effort and commitment of your board to conservation in your community and wish you a successful year.

Nāku noa nā



Hon Willow-Jean Prime  
Minister of Conservation

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.doc.govt.nz/about-us/statutory-and-advisory-bodies/conservation-boards/conservation-board-manual/conservation-board-statutory-functions-and-powers/>



## Appendix II – Annual Work Programme 2023-2024

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### CANTERBURY AORAKI CONSERVATION BOARD TE RŪNANGA PAPA ATAWHAI O WAITAHA ME AORAKI WORK PROGRAMME HŌTAKA MAHI 2023/2024

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#### WORK PROGRAMME OVERVIEW HŌTAKA MAHI TIRO WHĀNUI

##### PURPOSE KAUPAPA

This work programme was developed in August 2023 by the Canterbury Aoraki Conservation Board/Te Rūnanga Papa Atawhai o Waitaha me Aoraki (the Board), in response to the Minister of Conservation's annual Letter of Expectation to Conservation Boards, dated 1 May 2023.

It has been developed for the Board to give effect to its:

- Functions under Section 4,<sup>1</sup> and Section 6M of the Conservation Act 1987
- Powers of the Board as prescribed under Section 6N of the Conservation Act 1987
- The role described in Section 30 of the National Parks Act 1980
- Other statutory requirements of conservation boards.

#### STRUCTURE WHAKATAKOTO

##### Part A: [Poari katoa]

Whole Board activities aimed at statutory functions and obligations of the Board, including:

- Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- Te Huringa Āhuarangi Climate change
- Whanaungatanga Liaison
- Whakamahere Planning

##### Part B: [Komiti iti]

Board activities that arise from risks/issues/opportunities the Board sees that will further conservation. These are the key focus areas for the Board's advocacy efforts for the year:






- Te Mana o Te Taiao
- Ngāi Tahu Rangatiratanga
- Hapori people and place



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<sup>1</sup> The Board has a statutory obligation to act in a manner that is consistent with Section 4 of the Conservation Act 1987: "This Act shall be so interpreted and administered as to give effect to the principles of the Treaty of Waitangi". Section 4 is a powerful and fundamental provision, requiring more than procedural steps and must be considered in all actions and undertakings of the Board.





<p>8. The Board will ensure the reviewed Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park Management Plan is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Co-designed with Kaitiaki Rūnaka and reflective of the Department’s responsibility to give effect to the principles of Te Tiriti, and;</li> <li>b. Proactively recognises and enables Ngāi Tahu values, rights, and interests in Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park at both an outcomes and policy level.</li> <li>c. Reflective of wider community feedback, as far as practicable</li> </ul> <p>9. The Board will receive annual reporting on the implementation of, and active participation in the review of all relevant Statutory Plans (including in neighbouring areas):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Canterbury Waitaha Conservation Management Strategy (2016)</li> <li>b. Te Waihora Joint Management Plan (2005)</li> <li>c. Arthur’s Pass National Park Management Plan (2007)</li> <li>d. Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park Management Plan (2004)</li> <li>e. Rangitahi/Molesworth Conservation Management Plan</li> </ul>	<p>8. For much of the year, the Board, did not participate in any workshops to develop the content of the Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park Management Plan, while the Department negotiated funding and the framework for consultation with Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu and the Kaitiaki Rūnaka. However, the Board did contribute to workshops on milestone development, aircraft issues within the National Park and the effects of climate change. The Board continues to engage with the Operations Director in relation to remuneration for mana whenua.</p> <p>9. The Department’s bi-monthly status reports from the District Offices enabled the Board to monitor the implementation of all plans.</p> <p>a. Canterbury Waitaha Conservation Management Strategy (2019)</p> <p>The method in which the CMS Milestones are reported on was revised by the Department and the Board for 2023-24. This simplified version was commented on by the Board and the Department followed up with clear explanations.</p> <p>b. Te Waihora Joint Management Plan (2005) No progress has been made in partnership with Ngāi Tahu for the provision of monitoring reports for the Te Waihora Joint Management Plan (2005).</p> <p>c. &amp; d. The Department provided monitoring reports for Arthur’s Pass and Aoraki/Mt Cook National Park Management Plans in October 2023. The Board discussed the reports at this meeting and provided comments to the Department.</p>	              
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<p>10. The Board will actively monitor, and where appropriate engage in, the development of other planning and legislative tools, including providing input into the current stewardship land review</p> <p>11. The Board will maintain and provide to the Department a trigger list of areas of focus that it expects to be consulted upon for permission/concession applications and provide the Department with advice and recommendations on permissions applications that meet the trigger criteria.</p>	<p>e. The Department provides regular updates to the Board on the review of the Rangitahi/Molesworth Conservation Management Plan.</p> <p>10. The Board requests updates from the Department’s Stewardship Team for each hui. However, the Board has not received updates on progress with the Northern South Island Stewardship Review and is unsure whether this will continue to be progressed.</p> <p>11. The Board responded to requests for comments on 10 concession applications. The Mt Cheeseman Ski Field renewal led to Board advice that raised concerns about ski field licence expansion, climate change effects and the management of infrastructure.</p> <p>The Board reviewed permissions applications in relation to exemptions from marginal strips, grazing licences, marine mammal export permits, sporting events, back country huts, and heli-skiing. These applications were in relation to public conservation land within the Board’s rohe including: Selwyn River Conservation Reserve, Loch Katrine Recreation Reserve, Waitaki River, Hanmer River, Makerikeri River, Hanmer Field Base and Picnic Area Conservation Area, Korowai/Torlesse Tussocklands Park (Lake Lyndon), Lake Ruataniwha Conservation Area.</p> <p>The Board made a submission on the Fast-Track Bill and this was also presented orally to the Select Committee by Heather Purdie and Richard Suggate. Key points were that the legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did not recognise Te Tiriti</li> <li>• Overrode key provisions of the Conservation, Reserves and Wildlife Acts</li> <li>• Reduced the environment to a minor factor in decisions</li> <li>• Did not provide for Conservation Board participation in concession applications</li> </ul>	 
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Did not require compliance with CMS and management plans</li><li>• Allowed Reserves Act covenants to be extinguished.</li></ul>	
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## PART B: Subcommittees Komiti iti


### Board objectives / Whāinga Poari:

The Board will undertake a range of activities to further conservation outcomes and respond to key areas of concern or opportunities. The aim is to effectively advance these causes in a meaningful way that reiterates the value of the Board and enables Board members to make a difference. The intention is to address these matters via subcommittees comprising of interested and active Board members.



Key focus areas of advocacy by the Board in the 2023/2024 year include Te Mana o Te Taiao Biodiversity, Ngāi Tahu Rangatiratanga and Hapori/Community.


### Subcommittee Komiti Iti – Te Mana o Te Taiao Biodiversity

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES - Te Mana o Te Taiao Biodiversity	Progress Commentary	Status
1. Work strategically to advocate for improved conservation outcomes for braided riverbeds, species and associated aquatic and terrestrial ecosystems.	<p>Gravel extraction applications enabled Board feedback to help protect braided river habitat.</p> <p>The Board received presentations from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Karl Russell (Te Rūnanga o Arowhenua) and Brad Edwards, Ranger River Restoration, Department of Conservation in relation to braided awa and the Rakitata.</li><li>- Matiu Prebble &amp; Kenny Brown (Wairewa Rūnanga) including site visit to key sites of rūnanga mahi at Te Roto o Wairewa/Lake Forsyth Lake with a focus on the values and future aspirations in relation to future rūnanga-led biodiversity initiatives.</li></ul>	
2. Advocate for Department of Conservation resourcing, monitoring, prioritisation, technical capacity, working with others, and data and systems for pest animals and plants – biodiversity threats. Biological threats and pressures are reduced and managed.	<p>The Board received briefings and updates on Jobs 4 Nature, Tāwhaki (joint venture to advance Aotearoa's aerospace industry and rejuvenate the whenua at Kaitorete), and Pest Free Banks Peninsula.</p> <p>Board members Prof. Philip Hulme and Richard Suggate participated in a NZ Biosecurity Institute Workshop on new approaches to biosecurity management. Prof. Philip Hulme participated in two meetings with the Wilding Conifer Management Group to highlight current research insights and help develop a future strategy for managing wilding conifers in the New Zealand high country.</p>	


<p>3. Advise and advocate for the protection of marine mammals and threatened marine species (e.g., Hector’s dolphin), where opportunities arise.</p>	<p>The Board expressed concern about the implementation of the Marine Mammal Protection Plan for Sail GP in 2023 and were pleased that a more robust plan was approved by the Department for the 2024 racing days.</p> <p>The Board sought clarification from the Department on their lines of communication in relation to whale strandings.</p> <p>The Board expressed concern in relation to dolphins caught in fishing nets and received additional context from the Department re on-board cameras on commercial fishing vessels, along with a copy of the South Island Hector’s Dolphin Bycatch Reduction Plan.</p>	
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**Subcommittee Komiti Iti - Ngāi Tahu Rangatiratanga**

PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES - Ngāi Tahu Rangatiratanga	Progress Commentary	Status
<p>4. Provide insight on Ngāi Tahu perspectives around key issues - including stewardship land reclassification, marine reserve proposals, and DOC/Ngāi Tahu working relationships - to the full Board and contribute to Board submissions or other correspondence related to these matters.</p>	<p>The Board receives a report from Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu appointees at each Board hui regarding key Ngāi Tahu mahi and perspectives on issues arising. In addition, Ngāi Tahu Board members provide updates on local issues through liaison reports.</p> <p>Ngāi Tahu Board reps and, where appropriate, other subcommittee members, also regularly seek the perspectives of mana whenua on a range of topics and communicate this information back to the full Board to aid in Board decision-making on a case-by-case basis.</p>	
<p>5. Champion Board advocacy for initiatives that are consistent with Ngāi Tahu rangatiratanga (e.g., access, cultural harvest, resourcing), especially for activities occurring on public conservation lands and waters.</p>	<p>Subcommittee have been vocal on resourcing equity and relationship matters surrounding the Aoraki Mt Cook National Park Management Plan process.</p> <p>The subcommittee has also raised questions regarding communication processes with mana whenua for marine mammal strandings.</p>	

<p>6. Liaise with relevant mana whenua groups to identify opportunities to connect with, and deepen Board understanding of, mana whenua and their conservation priorities as part of bi-monthly Board meetings</p>	<p>Subcommittee routinely connects with and explores opportunities to learn from mana whenua who have relationships with the locations each bi-monthly Board meeting is held.</p> <p>Board field trips have included the participation of mana whenua and have visited rūnaka projects. In particular the Board was impressed by the initiative of Wairewa Rūnanga in working to improve the ecosystem health of their lake through the joint development of a canal to allow better lake level management and surveys of the response of aquatic vegetation.</p> <p>Mana whenua from Te Manahuna also hosted us at Arowhenua Marae, joined us for a fieldtrip around Aoraki Mt Cook National Park, and shared their views at our Board meeting and workshop.</p>	
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**Subcommittee Komiti Iti - Hapori Community, People and Place**

<p><b>PLANNED BOARD ACTIVITIES - Hapori Community</b></p>	<p><b>Progress Commentary</b></p>	<p><b>Status</b></p>
<p>7. Encourage the maintenance and replacement (as required) of backcountry assets and infrastructure by the Department. Advocate for the removal of any abandoned or unused infrastructure by concession holders and encourage any new concessions to include bonds to ensure landscape and ecosystems can be returned to their natural state if/when concessions activities cease.</p>	<p>The Board provided feedback to the Department on the removal of the damaged Clough cableway &amp; the Board chair participated in a multi-agency hui to discuss the future of the cableway &amp; discussion about infrastructure maintenance in general. The Board also listened to a public forum presentation on the subject from Peter Wilson. The cableway was subsequently removed.</p> <p>The Board strongly argued the case for bonds or insurance to ensure removal of redundant infrastructure on ski fields.</p> <p>The Board received a presentation by the Mt Hutt Ski Field Manager, which focused on initiatives to reduce</p>	

	<p>the companies carbon emissions, such as new visitor transport restrictions and new technology to maximise snowmaking efficiencies.</p>	
<p>8. Encourage discussion and thought leadership on future climate change impacts on access and infrastructure in the backcountry; and advocate for low carbon access on conservation land and other Crown estate used for recreation and hunting options as and where appropriate.</p>	<p>The Board advocated for the repair or replacement of Clough Cableway to preserve walking access (low carbon) at the head of the Waimakariri.</p> <p>Board chair presented to the Department’s ESI Regional Leadership Team in relation to future of infrastructure management and climate change.</p> <p>The Board advocated for the cleanup of abandoned infrastructure at Mt Potts Recreation Area.</p>	
<p>9. As required, support other like-minded persons and community groups on access issues including over private land and paper roads.</p>	<p>Prof Hulme shared research insights with DOC science team and international protected area managers regarding potential risks of species introductions in NZ national parks arising from international tourist visits and associated infrastructure.</p>	
<p>10. Historic – Advocate for the ongoing maintenance of historic assets and encourage appropriate public access and interpretation at historic sites.</p>	<p>The Board has continued to be regularly updated on the asbestos removal at Godley Head, Banks Peninsula.</p> <p>The old hut on Horomaka Island, Port Levy has been removed due to safety concerns, leaving the Island with no accommodation or shelter for overnight stays.</p> <p>The Board advocated for the repair and retention of the historic Clough Cableway in Arthur’s Pass National Park.</p>	